

TITLE TAG CLIP WITH CARD CARRIER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR
DEVELOPMENT

(Not applicable)

REFERENCE TO SEQUENTIAL LISTING, A TABLE, OR A COMPUTER
PROGRAM LISTING APPENDIX SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT DISC

(Not applicable)

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1) Field of the invention

[0001] This invention relates to card holders. More specifically, the invention relates to a device for temporarily storing business cards in a safe place between the time the user gets the card and the time the user permanently files the card.

2) Description of the related art

[0002] The prior art has sophisticated methods of storing business cards. These cards may be kept on a rotatable file where they are physically visible. They may be kept in books having transparent pockets for easy viewing while being kept safe and in order. They may be scanned into computers for permanent storage and retrieval. When a person acquires a business card that he or she intends to keep and file, the person may either immediately and temporarily store the business card in a wallet for safety and ready access or may simply put the card in a pocket or purse until access to the permanent storage location is available. Each of these methods has obvious disadvantages. Storing the card in a wallet involves retrieving the wallet, opening the wallet, inserting the card,

closing the wallet, and storing the wallet. Storing the loose card in a pocket or purse runs the risk of the card being damaged or lost. Clips attached to card holders are known in the prior art.

[0003] US Pat. No. D345,992, issued to Mohsen 4/12/1994, teaches a tag comprising a clip, a connecting cord, and a tag with a top hole for the cord.

[0004] US Pat. No. D436,724, issued to Kojoori 2/5/2000, teaches a wallet and money clip combination. The clip is apparently used to hold dollar bills on the outside of the wallet and is not used for attaching the wallet to anything.

[0005] US Published Pat. Application No. 2001/0032690, invented by Gribovsky and published 10/25/2001, teaches a spine which is attached to a money clip. The spine also is attached to the proximal ends of two card holders. The clip serves as a money clip and does not attach the card holders to anything.

[0006] US Pat. No. 3,648,832, issued to Kirshenbaum et al 3/14/1972, teaches a card holder which is typically in a folded configuration. The holder cannot close if a card has been removed and not replaced, thus reminding the owner to replace the card. This device apparently works well for its intended purpose. There is no indication that the card holder is attached to anything.

[0007] US Pat. No. 3,958,788, issued to Feibelman 5/25/1976, discloses a horizontal bar having a slot, which slot receives one of two curved flanges attached to a display card, thus allowing easy sliding on and off of the bar by the display card. This disclosure does not reveal clipping the card to anything.

[0008] US Pat. No. 4,761,862, issued to Hiromori 8/9/1998, US Pat No. 5,533,236, issued to Tseng 7/9/1996, US Pat. No. 5,896,624, issued to Horswell

4/27/1999, US Pat. No. 5,950,283, issued to Sato 9/14/1999, and US Pat. No. 6,374,463, issued to Kaufman 4/23/2002, disclose clips having spring characteristics. The clips have bodies having a back portion and abutment portions. The abutment portions have free ends to which finger grips are attached. These clips may hold layers of paper. The clips are free standing and are not attached to anything.

[0009] US Pat. No. 4,784,199, issued to Wise 11/15/1988, discloses a clip which may be removably attached to a wallet. When attached, the wallet may be carried on the waistband. When detached, the wallet may be carried in the pocket. The wallet is either attached directly to the clip or not attached at all.

[0010] US Pat. No. 4,790,435, issued to Trusty 12/13/1988, discloses a carrying case and dispenser for business cards. This case forms part of a belt buckle and is thus limited in its utility.

[0011] US Pat. No. 5,313,721, issued to Filden 5/24/1994, discloses a clip which may be attached to clothing. The clip is attached to a card holder or a strap attached to a card holder. While the clip is said to be composed of fewer pieces than earlier clips, it is still complex in design and requires detailed manufacturing. The clip is limited to being attached to thin materials as the holding portion of the clip depends upon a stud and a pin.

[0012] US Pat. No. 5,564,166, issued to Roy 10/15/1996, discloses a spring-biased clip attached to a connector having an attaching member with a moveable leg capable of attachment to a badge. The clip would put a shearing pressure on a carrying garment and the badge would not be protected. There is no disclosure referring to carrying cards.

[0013] US Pat. No. 5,592,767, issued to Treske 1/14/1997, discloses a card holder attached by snap members to a strap and the strap being attached to a spring clip which may be attached to an object. The card holder attaches to the strap adjacent to the clip with substantially no distance between the clip and the card holder.

[0014] US Pat. No. 5,613,602, issued to Lage et al 3/25/1997, discloses a device for be magnetically held to metal surfaces such as refrigerators. The device includes a clip having spring loaded legs which holds an object to be displayed. One of the legs contains a magnet which holds the clip to the metal surface. The other leg contains a carrier which includes a backing panel and a protector for holding and displaying business cards. The usefulness of this device is limited to ferrous surfaces.

[0015] US Pat. No. 5,615,454, issued to Contarino 4/1/1997, discloses an alligator clip, a chain, and a split-ring holder for a magnetically encoded card. The card carried by this device is not protected.

[0016] US Pat. No. 5,653,276, issued to Niernberger 8/5/1977, discloses a combination of a wallet and a money clip wherein the money clip is covered by a retaining strap. This device does not allow for the display of cards.

[0017] US Pat. No. 5,718,329, issued to Ippolito et al 2/17/1998, discloses a combination of a money clip and card holder. The cards fit inside the holder and are not visible.

[0018] US Pat. No. 5,727,696, issued to Valiulis 3/17/1998, discloses a transparent holder for business cards which may be supported by a hook. The hook and the card holder are made of a single piece and there is no separation between the two parts.

[0019] US Pat. No. 6,108,957, issued to Zapawa 8/29/2000, discloses a card holder to be worn around the neck. The whole device contains a cord which goes around the neck, a swivel which attaches to the lower end of the cord, a connecting piece between the swivel and the card holder, and the card holder. The cord is a conventional cord and the card holder hangs from the neck rather than clipping to something.

[0020] US Pat. No. 6,301,751, issued to Ohlson 10/16/2001, discloses a holding means which opens upwardly, a main part attached to the holding means, a hook-shaped device attached to the main part, and an identification card attached to the hook-shaped device.

[0021] US Pat. No. 6,523,292, issued to Slavik 2/25/2003, discloses a device for holding a greeting card to a flower stem. The device contains a clip for attaching to the stem of a plant, clothing, or a visor; an intermediate securing strand; and a casing for holding a greeting card or name tag. The casing of this invention is a hard hollow frame suitable for holding only a single card. Also, the clip is a plastic cylindrical spring which contains teeth designed to penetrate the object holding the clip.

[0022] While each of the above-described holders for cards or other objects is useful, there is room for improvement in several areas. The clip, itself should be sturdy and of such a nature that it has the ability to securely clip onto substrates of varying sizes ranging from single layers of fabric to automobile visors without doing damage to the substrate. The clip and the intermediate securing piece must be securely held to each other. It is desirable that the intermediate securing piece offers an information-carrying area. Finally, it is desirable for the card holder (hereinafter, carrier) to carry more than a single card. It is also desirable that a device be available which contains a clip securely

attached to an intermediate securing piece which is attached to a second clip. Finally, it is desirable that a device be available which provides a clip which is securely attached to a card carrier, there being no danger of the clip and card carrier becoming detached.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0023] In a first embodiment of this invention, the invention relates to card carriers comprising a transparent case attached to a clip through an intermediate securing piece. In a second embodiment of this invention, a first clip is attached to an intermediate securing piece, which in turn is attached to at least one second clip. In a third, and most preferred, embodiment of this invention, a clip is attached directly to a transparent case. In all cases the clip is attached to the adjacent piece by a unique connection involving a connecting piece on two surfaces of one of the jaws of the clip.

[0024] Virtually any clip known in the art may be used in this invention. The clip may be the conventional and ubiquitous tension clip in the shape of an isosceles triangle having a pair of finger grips to enable easy opening of the clip. Spring clips are suitable for use in this invention. An example of a spring clip is the well-known clothes pin. A locking clip such as disclosed in US Pat. No. 5,388,313 issued to Cameron Feb. 14, 1995 is also suitable for use in this invention. A single requirement is that the clip has a flat front surface for attachment to the connector piece. Thus, suitable clips have an open end of the clip which can attach to a portion of a garment or other substrate and one side of the clip has a flat surface.

[0025] In two embodiments of this invention, the clip is attached to an intermediate securing piece by means of a strong transparent connecting piece. In a third embodiment of this invention, the clip is attached directly to the card carrier by means of

the connecting piece. The connecting piece is strong, tear resistant, transparent, and has qualities which allow it to firmly adhere or be attached to the clip, the intermediate securing piece, when present, and the carrier.

[0026] A first section of the connecting piece securely fits onto the inside surface of the front side of the clip. A second section of the connecting piece securely fits onto the outside surface of the front side of the clip. The sections of connecting piece are wider than the clip. The portions of the connecting piece which extend beyond the clip attach to each other, forming a splice which secures the connecting piece to the clip. In the first embodiment, from the front side of the clip, the connecting piece extends and is attached to the front surface of the intermediate securing piece and continues away from the clip to be attached to the card carrier. In the second embodiment, from the front side of the clip, the connecting piece extends from the front surface of a first clip to the front surface of the intermediate securing piece and continues away from the first clip to be attached to the front side of a second clip. In a third embodiment, from the front side of the clip, the connecting piece extends and attaches to the front side of the card carrier.

[0027] The intermediate securing piece is preferably made of sturdy paper, cloth, or plastic, but other suitable materials may be used. The intermediate securing piece should be wider than the clip. The length is variable, but it is preferred that it be long enough to carry visual information.

[0028] In a first embodiment of this invention, the end of the intermediate securing piece opposite the clip is attached to a carrier for a plurality of cards. In this embodiment, the connecting piece attaching to the intermediate securing piece extends beyond the intermediate securing piece onto the carrier. Staples, rivets, paste, glue,

cement, or lamination may be used to help secure the connecting piece to the carrier. The carrier is a conventional multi-sectioned plastic card carrier having plastic sheets wherein each sheet contains an open pocket for receiving at least one card. The open ends of the pockets are directed toward the clip.

[0029] In a second embodiment of this invention, the intermediate securing piece has a first end and a second end. The first end of the intermediate securing piece is attached to the first clip. The second end of the intermediate securing piece is attached to a second clip. This allows a first clip to be attached to a substrate and an intermediate securing piece optionally having information thereon to be attached to a second clip which may be used to hold any desired object. If desired, additional clips may be attached to the intermediate securing piece.

[0030] In a third, and preferred, embodiment of this invention, the clip is attached directly to the card carrier. The connecting piece is connected to the front of the clip. The connecting piece attaches directly to the front surface of the card carrier.

[0031] A wide variety of attachment methods are available for attaching the intermediate securing piece to the carrier. A connecting piece splice similar to that used in attaching the clip to the intermediate securing piece is suitable. Also, glue, paste, cement, and lamination are suitable. Attaching aids such as staples or rivets may be used to provide a stronger attachment.

[0032] The carrier portion of the device of this invention may be used as a temporary holder of business cards. It may be used to hold driving directions to the visor of a car to allow hands-free driving. It may be used to hold coupons while shopping, reminder notes, check lists, calendars, pictures, etc. Accordingly, the carrier portion has

no limitation as to size and shape except the obvious limitation that it must be suitable to be carried by the user and capable of carrying the intended cards. The carrier is preferably made of transparent pliable plastic.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0033] Fig. 1 is a front elevational view of a first embodiment of the present invention wherein there is a clip, a connector piece, an intermediate securing piece, and a carrier for a plurality of cards.

[0034] Fig. 2 is a perspective elevational view of a first embodiment of the present invention.

[0035] Fig. 3 is a front elevational view of a first embodiment of the present invention.

[0036] Fig. 4 is a front elevational view of a second embodiment of the present invention wherein there is a clip, a connector piece, an intermediate securing piece, and a second clip.

[0037] Fig. 5 is a front elevational view of a second embodiment of this invention wherein there are two additional side clips attached to the intermediate securing piece.

[0038] Fig. 6 is a front elevational view showing just the clip, the connector piece, and the intermediate securing piece useful for the first two embodiments of this invention.

[0039] Fig. 7 is an exploded front elevational view of the clip, connector piece, and intermediate securing piece showing the attachment mechanism in greater detail.

[0040] Fig. 8 is a perspective elevational view from the rear of the clip showing the connecting piece on the inner surface of the front side wherein the two pieces of the connecting piece are attached by adhesive.

[0041] Fig. 9 is an exploded side cross-sectional view of the clip and the means for attachment of the clip to the intermediate securing piece.

[0042] Fig. 10 is an elevational perspective view of a variety of the clips which are useful in the present invention.

[0043] Fig. 11 is an elevational perspective view of a variety of fastening means useful in connecting the intermediate securing piece to the carrier.

[0044] Fig. 12 is an elevational perspective view of the third embodiment of the present invention showing a clip attached directly to a carrier.

[0045] Fig. 13 is an elevational front view of the third embodiment of the invention showing two clips attached to a carrier.

[0046] Fig. 14 is an elevational front view of the third embodiment of the invention showing three clips attached to a carrier.

[0047] Fig. 15 is an exploded front elevational view of the third embodiment showing the several components of the device.

[0048] Fig. 16 is a front elevational view of the assembled third embodiment of this invention.

[0049] Fig. 17 is a perspective elevational view from the rear of the clip showing the connecting piece on the inner surface of the front side wherein the two pieces of connecting piece are attached by lamination.

[0050] Fig. 18 is a perspective elevational view from the rear of the clip showing the connecting piece on the inner surface of the front side wherein the two pieces of connecting piece are attached by the punch-press process.

[0051] Fig. 19 is a perspective elevational view from the rear of the clip showing the connecting piece on the inner surface of the front side wherein the two pieces of connecting piece are attached by hook-and-eye attachment means.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0052] The invention will now be described with reference to the above drawings, wherein like descriptive numbers refer to like features throughout. In referring to directions, it will be assumed that the upper end of the clip **2** (or first clip **2**) of the device **4, 6, 8** which is to be attached to a substrate is the proximal end **10** and that the lower end of the carrier **12** or the second clip **2'** is the distal end **14**.

[0053] With reference to Figs. 1-3, 6-11, and 17-19, a first embodiment of this invention will be described. The device **4** comprises a clip **2**, a connecting piece **16**, an intermediate securing piece **18**, and a carrier **12**.

[0054] Virtually any clip **2** having a flat front surface **20** is suitable for the present invention. Such clips **2** are well known in the art. One such clip **2** is described in US Pat. Nos. 4,761,862, 5,533,236, 5,896,624, and 5,950,283, which are incorporated herein by reference. Spring clips, banker's clips, tarp clips, bulldog spring clips, and others are equally suitable. The sole requirement is that the clips **2** have at least one flat surface **20** for the connector piece **16**.

[0055] The clip **2** is attached to an intermediate securing piece **18** by means of a strong transparent connecting piece **16**. The connecting piece **16** is strong, tear resistant,

transparent, and is firmly adhered or affixed to the clip **2**, the intermediate securing piece **18**, and the carrier **12**.

[0056] The intermediate securing piece **18** is a plastic, cloth, or paper sheet having a proximal edge **22**, a distal edge **24**, a front surface **26**, a rear surface **28**, and two side edges **30**. The intermediate securing piece **18** is wider than the clip **2** and is of any desired length. The lengths of the proximal **22** and distal **24** edges measure the width of the intermediate securing piece **18**. The lengths of the side edges **30** measure the length of the intermediate securing piece **18**.

[0057] The intermediate securing piece **18** is securely attached to the clip **2** in the following manner. A first piece **32** of clear connecting piece **16**, preferably reinforced tape, having a side edge **34** substantially equal to the height of a side edge **36** of the clip **2** is securely fastened to the inner surface **38** of the front side **40** of the clip **2**. The first piece of tape **32** is wider than the width of the clip **2** and extends beyond the side edges **36** of the clip **2**. A second piece **42** of the same or similar tape has a width equal to the first piece **32** and a length such that it will cover the front side **20** of the clip **2** and extend distally to cover the intermediate securing piece **18** and extend beyond the intermediate securing piece **18**. The second piece of tape **42** has the same width as the intermediate securing piece **18**. The second piece of tape **42** is secured to the flat front surface **20** of the front side **40** of the clip **2**. The portions of the second piece of tape **42** which extend beyond the front side **40** of the clip **2** attach to the corresponding portions of the first piece of tape **32**. Attachment may be accomplished by adhesion, lamination, press-punch attachment, and hook-and-eye attachment. The front surface **26** of the intermediate securing piece **18** is attached to the rear surface **44** of the second piece of tape **42** at a

point just distal to the clip **2**. The timing of this connection is not critical and may be done prior to or following the connection of the second piece of tape **42** and the clip **2**. In this manner a secure attachment is obtained between the clip **2** and the intermediate securing piece **18**.

[0058] The carrier **12** is a transparent plastic card carrier **12**. The carrier **12** has a proximal spine **46**, a plurality, preferably four, of sheets **48**, each sheet **48** having at least one pocket **50** therein wherein each pocket **50** opens proximally and may carry at least one card. These carriers **12** are conventional in the art and are extensively used in wallets and card carrying cases.

[0059] The above-described device **2** comprises a clip **2**, a connector tape **16**, an intermediate securing piece **18**, and a carrier **12**. The clip **2** and the intermediate securing piece **18** are firmly held together by the connector tape **16**. The intermediate securing piece **18** and the carrier **12** are held together by adhesion, lamination, press-punch, or hook-and-eye attachments. The connector tape **16** extends beyond the distal end **24** of the intermediate securing piece **18**. This attachment may be supplemented with additional holding means, such as staples **52**, rivets **54**, glue, paste, cement, and lamination. In this arrangement, the second tape **42** is adhered to the front surface **56** of the carrier **12**. The device provides space **58** on the intermediate securing piece **18** for visual information.

[0060] With reference to Figs. 4-11, 13, 14, and 17-19, a second embodiment of this invention will be described. The device **6** comprises a first clip **2**, a connector tape **16**, an intermediate securing piece **18**, and a second clip **2'**.

[0061] The first clip **2** of the device **6** is the same as that described above with reference to the first embodiment. The connector tape **16** is the same as that described above with reference to the first embodiment. The intermediate securing piece **18** is the same as that described above with reference to the first embodiment. The way in which the intermediate securing piece **18** is secured to the first clip **2** is the same as that described above with reference to the first embodiment. The second clip **2'** of the device **6** may be identical to the first clip **2** or it may be different in some respects, such as size or type of clip. The second clip **2'** is secured to the intermediate securing piece **18** in the same way as described above with reference to the first clip **2** in the first embodiment. If desired, additional clips **2''** may be attached to the intermediate securing piece **18**.

[0062] The second embodiment is thus a device **6** which comprises a first clip **2** which is secured by means of a connector tape **16** to an intermediate securing piece **18** wherein the intermediate securing piece **18** is firmly attached to a second clip **2'**. There is space **58** for information on the intermediate securing piece **18**.

[0063] In the second embodiment, the intermediate securing piece **18** is wider than each of the first **2** and second **2'** clips. The intermediate securing piece **18** is securely attached to the first **2** and second **2'** clips. This attachment is in such a way that a first piece **32** of clear connecting tape **16** having a side edge **34** substantially equal in length to the length of a side **36** of the first **2** and second **2'** clip, respectively, and widths that are greater than the lengths of the distal edge **60** and proximal edge **60'** of the first **2** and second **2'** clip, respectively, are securely fastened to the inner surfaces **38**, **38'** of the front side **40**, **40'** of the first **2** and second **2'** clips, respectively, extending beyond the side edges **34**, **34'** of the first **2** and second **2'** clips. A second piece **42** of clear

connecting tape 16 has a width equal to the widths of first 32 piece of tape and the intermediate securing piece 18 and a length such that it will cover the outer surfaces 22 of the front sides 40 of the first 2 and second clips 2' and extend lengthwise to cover the intermediate securing piece 18. The second piece 42 of tape 16 is secured to the flat front surfaces 20 of the front sides 40, 40' of the first 2 and second 2' clips and to those portions of the first piece of tape 32 that extend beyond the edges 36, 36' of the first 2 and second 2' clips. The front surface 26 of the intermediate securing piece 18 is attached to the rear surface 44 of the second piece 42 of tape 16 and is thus attached to each of the clips 2, 2'.

[0064] The first clip 2 may be attached to a holding substrate such as a garment or automobile visor. The second clip 2' may be attached to an article which the user desires to display. This may be cards, larger sheets of paper, photographs or any other article desired to be handy and visible.

[0065] The third, and preferred, embodiment will be described with reference to Figs. 6-14 and 17-19.

[0066] The device 8 of the third embodiment comprises a clip 2, a connector tape 16, and a carrier 12. The clip 2 may be the same as the clips 2 described relative to the first embodiment. A first piece 32 of the connector tape 16 is securely fastened to the inner surface 38 of the front side 40 of the clip 2. The first piece 32 of tape 16 is wider than the width of the clip 2 and extends beyond the side edges 34 of the clip 2. A second piece 42 of the same or similar tape 16 has a width equal to the first piece 32 and a length such that it will cover the front side 40 of the clip 2 and extend distally to cover a portion of the front surface 56 of the proximal portion of the carrier 12. The clip 2 and the carrier

12 are firmly held together by adhesion, lamination, press-punch attachment, or hook-and-eye attachment. The connector tape **16** extends beyond the distal end **60** of the clip **2**. The attachment may be supplemented with additional holding means, such as staples **52**, rivets **54**, glue, paste, cement, and lamination. In this arrangement, the second piece **42** of the connector tape **16** is adhered to the front surface **56** of the carrier **12**.

[0067] The connector piece **16** may attach to the proximal portion of either the front or rear side of the carrier **12**.

[0068] Although the invention has been described and illustrated in detail, it is to be clearly understood that the same is by way of illustration and example, and is not to be taken by way of limitation. The spirit and scope of the present invention are to be limited only by the terms of the appended claims.